

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

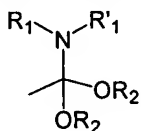
1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a 5-(acyloxy)-N,N-dialkyl-2-cyclopentene-1-acetamide of Formula III, comprising:

Reacting reacting a 3-acyloxy-5-hydroxycyclopentene of Formula I;

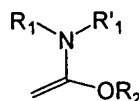


Formula I

with an amide acetal of Formula IIa or a ketene aminoacetal of Formula IIb;



Formula IIa



Formula IIb

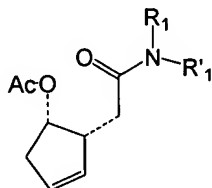
wherein; :

R₁ and R₁' are C₁ to C₄ alkyl or R₁ and R₁' taken together form a ring of 3 to 7 members;

R₂ is C₁ to C₄ alkyl; and

Ac is C₁ to C₄ alkanoyl;

at 90-140°C in a suitable solvent of boiling point >90°C while maintaining an alcohol R₂OH concentration of less than 3% by volume to give an acylhydroxycyclopenteneacetamide of Formula III; :



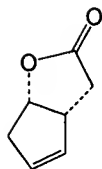
Formula III.

2. (Currently Amended) A process according to Claim claim 1 for preparing (4R, 5S)-3,3a,6,6a-tetrahydro-2H-cyclopentan[b]furan-2-one (4R, 5S)-3,3a,6,6a-tetrahydro-2H-cyclopentan[b]furan-2-one, further comprising the steps of:

a) Adding adding an alkali or alkali earth hydroxide, carbonate, bicarbonate, or quaternary ammonium hydroxide solution to give a homogeneous or biphasic mixture; and

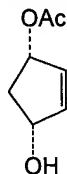
b) Adding adding a strong acid of pK_a < 2 to give the title lactone of Formula IV;

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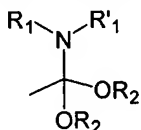
Formula IV.

3. (Currently Amended) A product prepared by a process comprising:
 Reacting reacting a 3-acyloxy-5-hydroxycyclopentene of Formula I;

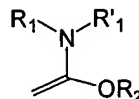


Formula I

with an amide acetal of Formula IIa or a ketene aminoacetal of Formula IIb;



Formula IIa



Formula IIb

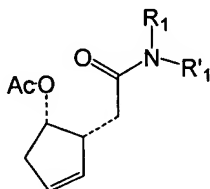
wherein; :

R_1 and R'_1 are C_1 to C_4 alkyl or R_1 and R'_1 taken together form a ring of 3 to 7 members;

R_2 is C_1 to C_4 alkyl; and

Ac is C_1 to C_4 alkanoyl;

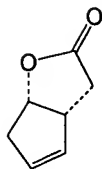
at 90-140°C in a suitable solvent of boiling point >90°C while maintaining an alcohol R_2OH concentration of less than 3% by volume to give an acylhydroxycyclopenteneacetamide of Formula III; :



Formula III.

4. (Currently Amended) A product prepared by a process according to Claim claim 3, further comprising the steps of:

- a) Adding adding an alkali or alkali earth hydroxide, carbonate, bicarbonate, or quaternary ammonium hydroxide solution to give a homogeneous or biphasic mixture; and
- b) Adding adding a strong acid of $pK_a < 2$ to give the title lactone of Formula IV;



Formula IV.